IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A method for sensing the surroundings in front of a road vehicle by means of a surroundings sensing system, ~~in particular an infrared night vision~~ system in which the surroundings data is sensed by means of a surroundings sensor, and objects within the surroundings data sensed by the surroundings sensor are detected by processing the sensor data,

wherein the perception region in which the objects are detected corresponds to a component-region of the region sensed by the surroundings sensor, ~~characterized in that~~

wherein the perception region is divided into a plurality of component-regions ~~and each of these component-regions is subjected to a specific evaluation~~, and evaluation takes place in one component-region and no evaluation takes place in another component-region,

wherein the surroundings data is subjected to a multi-stage evaluation,

wherein before the perception region is divided into a plurality of component-regions in the perception region a lane is firstly defined in order to subsequently restrict the perception region to the lane, and

wherein each of these component-regions is subjected to a specific evaluation.

2. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that before the perception region is divided into a plurality of component regions in the perception region, either a lane detection is carried out by image processing methods or a lane is defined by means of the data of a navigation system, in order to subsequently restrict the perception region to the lane~~ wherein the lane is defined in that either a lane detection is carried out by image processing methods or a lane is defined by means of the data of a navigation system.

3. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 [[2]], ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the perception region is restricted in such a way that, for the purpose of delimiting the lane, a further predefined tolerance region is also added.

4. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 ~~one of the preceding claims~~, wherein ~~characterized in that~~, for the purpose of carrying out evaluation in the perception region, object perception is carried out by means of image processing methods.

5. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 ~~one of the preceding claims~~, wherein ~~characterized in that~~, for the purpose of carrying out evaluation in the perception region, object classification is carried out by means of

classification methods in order to rule out false alarms.

6. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 4 ~~one of claims 4 or 5~~, wherein ~~characterized in that~~, for the purpose of evaluation in the perception region, the distance from detected objects is determined in order to be able to provide information about obstacles in good time.

7. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 ~~one of the preceding claims~~, wherein ~~characterized in that~~, for the purpose of carrying out evaluation in the perception region by means of tracking methods, the movement of objects is sensed in order to perceive whether their direction of movement corresponds to the vehicle's own movement.

8. (canceled)

9. (new) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the surroundings sensing system, is an infrared night vision system.